

(2) If SBA does not contact the contracting officer within 15 business days, the contracting officer may award the contract, unless the contracting officer has granted SBA an extension.

(3) The contracting officer may award the contract after receipt of a protest if the contracting officer determines in writing that an award must be made to protect the public interest.

(c) *Notice of determination.* SBA will notify the contracting officer, the protestor, and the protested concern of its determination.

(d) *Effect of determination.* The determination is effective immediately and is final unless overturned on appeal by the ADA/GC&8(a)BD, pursuant to § 126.805. If SBA upholds the protest, SBA will de-certify the concern as a qualified HUBZone SBC. If SBA denies the protest, after considering the merits of the protest, SBA will amend the date of certification on the List to reflect the date of protest decision.

§ 126.804 Will SBA decide all HUBZone status protests?

SBA will decide all protests not dismissed as premature, untimely or non-specific.

§ 126.805 What are the procedures for appeals of HUBZone status determinations?

(a) *Who may appeal.* The protested HUBZone SBC, the protestor, or the contracting officer may file appeals of protest determinations with SBA's ADA/GC&8(a)BD.

(b) *Timeliness of appeal.* SBA's ADA/GC&8(a)BD must receive the appeal no later than 5 business days after the date of receipt of the protest determination. SBA will dismiss any appeal received after the five-day period.

(c) *Method of Submission.* The party appealing the decision may deliver its appeal in person, by facsimile, by express delivery service, or by U.S. mail (postmarked within the applicable time period).

(d) *Notice of appeal.* The party bringing an appeal must provide notice of the appeal to the contracting activity contracting officer and either the protested HUBZone SBC or original protestor, as appropriate.

(e) *Grounds for appeal.* (1) SBA will re-examine a protest determination only if there was a clear and significant error in the processing of the protest or if the AA/HUB failed completely to consider a significant fact contained within the information supplied by the protestor or the protested HUBZone SBC.

(2) SBA will not consider additional information or changed circumstances that were not disclosed at the time of the AA/HUB's decision or that are based on disagreement with the findings and conclusions contained in the determination.

(f) *Contents of appeal.* The appeal must be in writing. The appeal must identify the protest determination being appealed and set forth a full and specific statement as to why the decision is erroneous or what significant fact the AA/HUB failed to consider.

(g) *Completion of appeal after award.* An appeal may proceed to completion even after award of the contract that prompted the protest, if so desired by the protested HUBZone SBC, or where SBA determines that a decision on appeal is meaningful.

(h) *Decision.* The ADA/GC&8(a)BD will make its decision within 5 business days of its receipt, if practicable, and will base its decision only on the information and documentation in the protest record as supplemented by the appeal. SBA will provide a copy of the decision to the contracting officer, the protestor, and the protested HUBZone SBC, consistent with law. The ADA/GC&8(a)BD's decision is the final agency decision.

Subpart I—Penalties

§ 126.900 What penalties may be imposed under this part?

(a) *Suspension or debarment.* The Agency debarring official may suspend or debar a person or concern pursuant to the procedures set forth in part 145 of this title. The contracting agency debarring official may debar or suspend a person or concern under the Federal Acquisition Regulation, 48 CFR Part 9, subpart 9.4.

(b) *Civil penalties.* Persons or concerns are subject to civil remedies under the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. 3729–3733,